

REMARKS

At the time the Office Action issued, claims 2-7 and 9-12 were pending. Claims 2-7 and 9-12 currently stand rejected under § 112, first and second paragraphs, but have been indicated to be otherwise allowable.

Applicant has amended the Drawings and the Claims and respectfully submit that the amended application overcomes the rejections for the following reasons.

Drawings

The drawings have been objected to as under 37 CFR 1.83(a) because they fail to show certain elements recited in the claims. Applicant respectfully submits that the Drawings as originally submitted provide sufficient illustration of the invention to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to understand and practice the invention. Nonetheless, in the interest of expediency the drawings have been amended to further illustrate the claim elements.

Specifically, new Figures 2A and 3A have been added. These show the embodiments of Figures 2 and 3, respectively, in their alternative configurations and show the reversal of the direction of fluid flow. In addition, to further clarify the claimed concepts, claim 2 has been amended as described below.

In addition, new Figure 4 has been added to illustrate the embodiment of a four-way valve. Text relating to the new Figure has been added to the specification.

It is respectfully submitted that the inclusion of the reference signs do not constitute addition of matter, because the concepts they illustrate were expressly described in the original specification.

Specification

In order to maintain conformity between the Drawings and the specification, the latter has been amended as follows:

References to new Figures 2A and 3A have been added to the Brief Description of the Drawings and to the text relating to those figures. No new matter has been added, as the new Figures are merely a depiction of the alternative configuration of the equipment depicted in original Figures 2 and 3.

A reference to new Figures 4 has been added to the Brief Description of the Drawings and a paragraph relating to Figure 4 has been added. No new matter has been added, as the original specification contained a description of a four-way valve, which has been repeated, and the subject matter of Figure 4 would have been recognized from that description by one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claim amendments

Applicant believes that the Drawing Amendments discussed above address the issues raised under § 112, first paragraph. If the Examiner feels that further drawing amendments are required, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned so as to expedite resolution of this issue.

Claim 2 has been amended so that the last limitation thereof reads, "wherein the drilling fluid outlet system comprises an inlet and an outlet, the choke means includes a first choke connection and a second choke connection, and the alternating means connects the inlet alternatingly to the first or second choke connection and connects the outlet alternatingly to the second or first choke connection." Applicant hopes that this amendment clarifies claim 2 and address the issues raised under § 112, second paragraph. If the Examiner feels that claim 2 needs further clarification, he is encouraged to telephone the undersigned so that mutually satisfactory language can be determined.

Concluding remarks

Applicant respectfully submits that the specification and claims, both new and as amended, are now in a state ready for allowance. In the event the Examiner has any questions or issues regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned prior to the issuance of any written action.

Respectfully submitted,

Egbert Jan van Riet

By 

Attorney, Marcella D. Watkins

Registration No. 36,962

(713) 241-1041

P.O. Box 2463
Houston, Texas 77252-2463